

CONFERENCE Connection

Alabama • Georgia • Mississippi
South Carolina • Tennessee • NW Florida



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

February 15, 2017

From the Conference Office



Conference Minister Transition Celebration

Saturday, March 4, 2017 | 2:00 pm at First Congregational in Atlanta

Join us for a Conference Minister Transition Celebration as we say farewell to June Boutwell and we welcome Marie Bacchiocchi

**Saturday, March 4, 2017
2:00-3:30 p.m.**

The Commons at First Congregational Church
125 Ellis Street NE, Atlanta Georgia

Light refreshments will be served

Parking is available in the First Church lot at 140 John Wesley Dobbs Ave; please see attendant for a UCC parking pass

So we can get an accurate headcount, please RSVP.

RSVP NOW

Moderator's Message

by JR Finney, Conference Moderator

"There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth: ... A right time to plant and another to reap." (Ecclesiastes 3:1 & 2b, The Message)

February 12 - 19 is a significant week in my life. It's when the memories of My Precious Mom, James Ella Reid Finney are ever present in most all I do. She died on the 12th, was buried on 15th, the anniversary of her and my



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Coming Events

PATHWAYS Advisory Committee
Sunday, Feb 18, 10 am

Capital Campaign Grant Application Deadline
Saturday, Feb 25

Patricia Keeler and Sonya Gravelee Installed as Chaplains
Sunday, Feb 26, 5:00 pm
Birmingham, AL

father's wedding is the 18th, and she was born on the 19th. This week is even more significant to me because Covenant Community Church (UCC) where I pastor was founded on February 15, 1981.

Mom was kind of a Sage full of sayings that contained valuable life lessons. She always invoked one of those sayings when recognizing the extraordinary gift of ministry or service someone had rendered. She would say, "It's always important to praise the bridge that brought you across." So, allow me this opportunity to do just that as the first week of March will be a significant week in the life of our Southeast Conference.

The Southeast Conference owes a great debt of thanksgiving and gratitude to all of our previous Conference Ministers that have been part of the bridge that brought us across nearly 51 years of ministry. However, my tenure as a member of the Board of Directors and now as Conference Moderator and Board Chair has allowed me to see up close the tremendous value of the ministry and gifts of Reverend June Boutwell as our Designated Conference Minister. For the past three years, she has tirelessly provided us with much needed leadership and guidance pastorally, administratively and financially. Her devotion and efforts have poised our Conference to better meeting the future challenges of a constantly changing church.

The efforts she has planted will allow our incoming Interim Conference Minister, Reverend Marie Bacchiocchi, to reap the benefits of those efforts and began planting the seeds of her ministry to take our conference to a greater future. So, on March 4th, at First Congregational Church in Atlanta, from 2:00 - 3:30 pm, I invite you (if you can) to join us for a "Conference Minister Transition Celebration" as we say farewell to Reverend June Boutwell. It's an opportunity to paraphrase my Mom "praising her for being an essential element in the bridge that brought us across this last 3 years." And we will welcome Reverend Marie Bacchiocchi, as she begins her work on the bridge to carry us forward.



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2017. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers. [Click here to download the entire 2017 prayer list.](#)

Week of February 19

- Central Congregational UCC; Atlanta, Georgia
- Southeast Conference Board of Directors
- Henrietta Andrews
- Betsy Taylor Flory
- Truman Moore

Week of February 26

**Conference Minister
Transition Celebration**
Saturday, March 4, 2 pm
*First Congregational,
Atlanta*

SEC Staff Meeting
Monday, Mar 6, 10:00 am
Atlanta, Georgia

OCWM Giving



Our Church's Wider Mission provides for programs, resources, and tools to keep our churches strong, effective, and growing. Thanks to you, we met our 2016 goal, but you can still give.

Conference Staff

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Chris Lyman Waldron
IT Specialist

- Trinity Congregational UCC; Athens, Alabama
- SEC Standing Committees, Advisory Committees, Task Forces
- Tim Downs
- Chris Lyman Waldron
- Marvin Morgan

Prayer Requests

- Continued prayers for **Rev. Gary Myers** as he continues to recover from mild stroke.
- We hold **Rev. Glenna Shepherd's spouse Clare** in prayer as the family mourns the death of Clare's mother. Services were held February 9, 2017. Glenna serves Pleasant Hill Community Church in Tennessee and is currently in Great Britain with Clare.
- Gratitude for the ministries of **Charmaine Penn Johnson, Jennifer Sanders, Sonya Gravlee, and Patricia Keeler** who all will be (or have been) installed during the month of February.
- Traveling mercies for **Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi** as she journeys to Atlanta to begin her ministry in the Southeast Conference as Interim Conference Minister.
- Prayers for **Rev. Rodney Franklin**, Senior Minister at First Congregational Birmingham as he is part of a UCC leadership delegation that will be visiting the Middle East to engage with partners and learn about the impacts of the use of economic leverage. This is one of many implementation efforts the national setting is taking around the 2015 General Synod resolution, "[A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)".

Conference Transitions

- **Charmaine Penn Johnson** was ordained at Victory for the World and installed as Associate Minister at Kirkwood UCC on February 5, 2017.
- **Jennifer Sanders** was installed as Pastor to Beloved Community UCC, Birmingham, AL, on February 12, 2017.
- **Patricia Keeler** will be installed under a four-way covenant at Beloved Community Church on February 26, 2017. She is serving as Chaplain at University of Alabama Birmingham Medical Center.
- **Sonya Gravlee** will be installed under a four-way covenant at Beloved Community Church on February 26, 2017. She is serving as Chaplain at St. Vincent's East Hospital in Birmingham.
- **Amber Kirkendoll** will resign her pastorate of Safe Harbor UCC, Flowood, Mississippi on February 26, 2017.
- **Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi** will begin her service as Interim Conference Minister on March 6. She will be attending the Council of Conference Ministers meeting her first week and will be available in the Conference March 13.

Churches in Transition

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia;
Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee;
Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; United Church, Huntsville, Tennessee; Safe Harbor Family Church, Flowood Mississippi.

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Connect with Us!



Annual Yearbook Reporting

The goal for the Southeast Conference is 100% participation in the **UCC Data and Yearbook Collection**. The deadline for entering data is March 8, 2017. A hard copy mailing has been sent to every church. If you require assistance with data entry, please contact Heather Bardole, the SEC Office Administrator, at 404-719-6572. You will need your church ID Number to log in. If you do not know the number, please contact the Southeast Conference at registrar@secucc.org.

[Read a great article](#) about Yearbook reporting on our website.

Instructions for using the Data Hub [are on our website](#).



Authorized Ministers Information Review

All SEC authorized ministers should have received an e-blast, email, or hard copy mailing with the Annual Information Review form. This needs to be completed on-line and submitted, emailed as an attachment, or completed and mailed to the Conference Office.

Please help us update our records. Contact Heather Bardole, Registrar, if you have not received this form. She can be reached at registrar@secucc.org or 404-719-6572. The Commission on Ministry will be following up with authorized ministers who do not submit a form.

Transforming Churches Tranforming Lives Grant Application

The "Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives" Grant Application Deadline for the spring cycle is February 25, 2017. [Submit your form online on our website](#).

Ministry Education Scholarships Due March 1

2017 Ministry Education Scholarships are available to those Members in Discernment who are preparing for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. Members in Discernment may apply for the Brown Endowment Scholarship and ONE other UCC Ministry Education Scholarship per year. [Learn more on our website](#).

News from Around the Conference

Charmaine Penn Johnson Ordained

Sunday, February 5, 2017 was a great day of celebration as the Southeast Conference ordained Charmaine Penn Johnson as a

minister in the United Church of Christ. Her ordination ceremony was held in the morning at Victory for the World in Stone Mountain, Georgia, with her official installation as Associate Minister at Kirkwood UCC in Atlanta that afternoon. [View more photos on our website.](#)



Jennifer Sanders Installed as Licensed Pastor

Jennifer Sanders was installed as the licensed pastor of Beloved Community Church in Birmingham, Alabama on February 12, 2017 at their regular worship service at 5:00 pm. Marcia Bentley represented the Commission on Ministry and June Boutwell represented the Southeast Conference. Acting Moderator Denyse Thornley-Brown presented Jennifer on behalf of the church. [Read more on our website.](#)



Global Ministries Speakers Available to Local Churches

Don and Maryjane Westra, finishing a four year appointment in Honduras for Common Global Ministries, are available to speak in the Southeast Conference and Tennessee Region Disciples of Christ. The dates they are available are March 25 - April 9, 2017.

Kahala Cannon, a missionary who has served in South Korea and India, and who is from Tennessee (member of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church Disciples of Christ) is available to speak in the Southeast Conference June 1 - 29, 2017. Global Ministries will be responsible for her transportation to the region/conference, and we request that the receiving congregations provide housing, meals, and local transportation.

[Learn more on our website.](#)

News from the United Church of Christ

General Synod 2017: June 30-July 4 in Baltimore, Maryland

Every two years, General Synod brings together thousands of faithful members of the United Church of Christ for formal church witness, inspirational worship, and fellowship with friends (new and old). In June 2017, thousands from across the country (and abroad) will gather for General Synod 2017 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Together, we will discern resolutions of witness, church structure, and function. We will stand up for issues that demand a faithful witness. And we will join together in worship each day to lift up the Stillspeaking God. At General Synod 2017, we will "Make Glad!" as we celebrate, debate, worship and witness. Join us. Learn more on the Synod website: synod.uccpages.org.



Antoinette Brown Award Nominations Due March 1, 2017

In 1975, the United Church of Christ honored two clergymen with the first Antoinette Brown Award, celebrating the life and ministry of the first woman ordained into Christian ministry since biblical times as well as the lives and ministries of UCC clergymen who exemplify Brown's spirit of trailblazing leadership in church and society.

Forty years later, the pathways are considerably widened for women in ministry in the UCC, but there are still necessarily pioneers and innovators in our midst, women who lead in extraordinary ways and who make possible other women's ministries. We invite your nominations of trailblazers: ordained clergymen in the UCC who honor Antoinette Brown's vision of women in leadership in church and society, while Catalysts are any sort of project, collective, congregation or organization that serves as a provocative place that advances and empowers women in ministry. [Download the nomination form from our website.](#)

ONA Gathering is June 27-29 in Baltimore

Don't miss National ONA Gathering June 27-29 in Baltimore -right before General Synod! Registration is now open for an event that will strengthen and expand your congregation's Open and Affirming commitment! [Learn more on the Coalition website.](#)

Get a White Privilege Facilitators Guide

New resources for discussion leaders are now available for the White Privilege: Let's Talk curriculum. [Learn more on the UCC website.](#)

UCC Statement on Draft Executive Order

Last week, a draft executive order entitled "Establishing a Government-Wide Initiative to Respect Religious Freedom" was

leaked to the press. Acknowledging that the order is a draft, and not knowing what a final version might bring, the fact that these ideas are being floated around the White House should trouble all Christians to their very cores. [Read more on the UCC website.](#)

Marketing Ideas Specifically Made for UCC Churches

Want new ideas for your social media or website? Check out the UCC Still Speaking Toolkit 2.0 for some cool new ideas. It has been created especially for local church communicators in the United Church of Christ. Here you will find:

- Directions and suggestions for social media
- Graphics for social media, print, and other uses
- Help with creating or upgrading your church website
- Brand guidelines for use of the UCC logo, emblem, motto, and "God is still speaking," and graphics
- 13 Inexpensive (or free) ways to increase community awareness of your church

No matter your budget or level of church communication skills, you'll find help here. [Learn more on our website.](#)

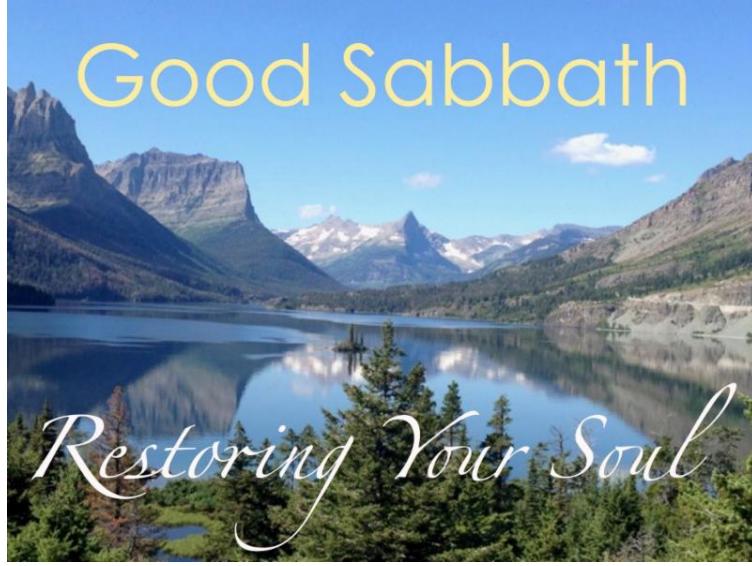
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UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

PATHWAYS Courses

"Good Sabbath! Restoring Your Soul"

Good Sabbath! This is hardly a greeting heard much among Christians, sounding at once ancient and "borrowed," but perhaps also curious and fresh in the ambivalence with which many Christians currently hold the Sabbath. This course is an invitation to reflect on the implications of the Sabbath for contemporary living. Does the Sabbath continue to speak to us in our resurrected lives in Christ? Is the Sabbath good for you, for us? These seem to be questions worth asking.
[Click here to learn more about the course](#)



Last Chance to Register for Polity Class

Registration closes on February 20 for the 2017 Spring online course at PATHWAYS, the leadership formation program of the Southeast Conference. The purpose of this course is to explore the history, polity, theologies, and practices of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor denominations.

[Click here to learn more about the course](#)

Training, Learning and Retreat Opportunities

Prophetic Faith: Exploring Social Justice Advocacy as a Congregation

Is your church group looking for a new study on faith-based social justice advocacy? This timely, ecumenical resource invites Sunday school classes, book clubs, clergy clusters, study groups, and spiritual friends to explore the public dimensions of biblical faith in today's world through personal reading and reflection, group discussion and learning activities, creative Bible study, and worship. Presented as seven, 90-minute sessions, the Prophetic Faith materials are readily adaptable to a weekend retreat setting or to a 14-week series of one-hour sessions. [Learn more on their website](#).

Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders: Pre-register by February 24

Monday-Friday, March 20-24, 2017
Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church
805 Mount Vernon Highway NW, Atlanta, Georgia

This 5-day training is intended to equip church leaders with skills for conflict transformation and mediation, both in situations of congregational conflict and interpersonal conflict. It includes lectures, discussion, and guided practice in role plays, and is designed to be active and practical in focus. The sessions emphasize hands-on skills training and real-life role-plays, based on conflicts faced by participants. This training is useful for pastors, lay leaders, judiciary staff, and others who serve with churches and parachurch organizations. [Learn more and register on the Lombard Peace Center website](#).

Back Bay Mission Accepting Scholarship Apps

Back Bay Mission is now accepting applications for the 2017 Shari Prestemon Social Justice Internship. This internship provides people between the ages of 19 and 35 with a unique opportunity to participate in a 10-week summer program tailored to their interests.

Drawing on the Mission's long experience in community engagement and advocacy for justice, the internship will nurture participants' passion for social justice and develop their appreciation for the church's role in seeking social justice.

Applications must be submitted by March 1. Notifications will be made by March 31. [Learn more about the internship and download an application.](#)